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## Antibiotics & Dental Care

## What is the harm in overusing antibiotics?

Your mouth is full of good and bad bacteria. The good bacteria keep your mouth healthy. Sometimes the bad bacteria take over and can cause an infection. In the mouth, draining the infection is often all that you need. If the dentist cannot drain infection completely, antibiotics are given to help fight the infection. Some people are also at more risk of an infection and your dentist might prescribe one dose of an antibiotic before a dental procedure to prevent an infection. If you use antibiotics too often, or incorrectly, the bacteria may develop antibiotic resistance. This is a protection mechanism that allows the bacteria to survive. In this case, the use of antibiotics does not kill the bad bacteria and may cause more harm by killing the good bacteria. Keeping the good bacteria is the best defense against bad bacteria. Some individuals may experience antibiotic resistance regardless of their use of antibiotics.

## Are antibiotics needed for dental care?

The use of antibiotics will depend on a number of factors including your dental condition, the procedure, as well as your personal medical health history. More recent studies show that antibiotics are not needed for many dental conditions.

Early detection and daily mouth care can prevent dental pain and infection. Brush twice daily, floss at least once a day, eat a well-balanced diet and visit your dentist regularly for an exam to detect the early signs of disease.



